



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



March 15, 2005

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR PROTOCOL FOR DEVELOPING A PILOT
PROJECT TO MONITOR HYGIENIC BEHAVIOR OF THE JAIL POPULATION IN
ORDER TO MINIMIZE THE SPREAD OF METHICILLIN RESISTANT
STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS WITHIN COUNTY JAILS**

On February 15, 2005, your Board directed the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to report back on a protocol for developing a pilot project to monitor hygienic behavior of the jail population in order to minimize the spread of Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) within County jails.

MRSA infections have become recognized as a global problem. Over the past two years, the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Health Services have worked closely together to confront this issue and have made significant progress. Through working with Supervisor Antonovich's staff, it was conveyed that the Board would like the Sheriff's Department to monitor and document, on an individual basis, each inmate who:

- Takes a shower.
- Receives a clothing exchange.
- Receives a bedding exchange.

As the Board is aware, the Sheriff's Department has been actively seeking means to improve inmate security, track inmate movement, and accurately document compliance with mandates, including Title 15. The Inmate Movement Prisoner Accountability Classification Taskforce (IMPACT) has been exploring creative solutions to these

A Tradition of Service

issues since June of 2004. As possible solutions to these issues were addressed, it became apparent that these issues had two solutions:

- Increase the number of staff positions.
- Improve technology.

INCREASED STAFFING

Increased staffing is an unreasonable solution because:

- It is too expensive.
- It would be time consuming, inefficient, and less accurate.
- The current lack of availability. Increased staffing needs are already required for reopening closed facilities.

TECHNOLOGY

During this quest for improvement, the Department realized technology was the only feasible solution to tracking and documenting this type of activity. The Department has reviewed improving the hand-held scanners currently in use, new scanning systems, and active and passive Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). We have visited the facilities of other agencies where this technology has been installed to observe the capabilities and effectiveness. We have tested various technologies in our facilities. Current radio frequency technology has not yet proven effective within the steel and concrete confines of County jail facilities. Results from attempts to upgrade current software applications were substandard.

The Department is convinced that other technologies exist which will provide the type of information sought by the Board, in an efficient and accurate manner. The need for this information was acknowledged by the Department and the Board in 1997 when it was included in Phase 2 of the Custody Automation Plan. Although approved by the Board, this phase of the Custody Automation Plan has not yet been funded.

Rather than seek an expedient and superficial solution that would soon become obsolete, the Department plans to develop a program that would fit into the long term strategy of the Custody Automation Plan. As part of the ongoing efforts by the Department and the Board to improve custody operations, the Custody Automation Plan coordinator and the Data Systems Bureau met with Syscon Justice Systems in order to determine a course of action to implement these important technological improvements. It is expected that specific recommendations for technology to expedite this part of the Custody Automation Plan will be submitted to Department executives by April 15, 2005. It is anticipated that the Department will then submit the plan and a request for funding to the Board.

CONCLUSION

The Sheriff's Department is extremely concerned about the spread of MRSA infections within the County jails. As a result of our aggressive efforts and partnership with the Board of Supervisors, the Department is nationally recognized as leading the country in the procedures to identify, treat, and limit the spread of MRSA in custody facilities.

We will continue to work closely with the Board to obtain the technology capable of capturing this information. The Department recognizes that this information, combined with the efforts already in place, will assist in the war to combat MRSA infections within the jail. I look forward to working with the Board in finding solutions to this serious and mutual concern.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me or Chief Charles M. Jackson, Correctional Services Division, at (213) 893-5017.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leroy D. Baca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF